

ECHO JAN. 11, 1984

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# Altbergthal

## On the banks of Buffalo Lake

• by J. C. Fehr

On the east bank of the picturesque Buffalo Lake a few miles southwest of Altona lies the village of Altbergthal. This village was first settled in 1881. After all the better land in the East Reserve had been taken up, the people looked to this part of the West Reserve which was still unsettled.

One famous resident of this village was the first Bishop of the Bergthaler Mennonites of this area; namely, Bishop Johan Funk. Many of the villages that were established in the 1880s have long since dissolved, but Altbergthal has survived the years.

Of this village you could say that they bake pancakes only on one side (of the street that is), as the main street runs along the edge of Buffalo Lake, hence they all live only on the east side of the street.

The Buffalo Lake, the largest natural waterway in the municipality, is very much, or was, very much part of life in the village. In the wintertime it provided recreation for the school children and the neighboring communities used it for hockey games.

In the years when the domestic water supply in winter was from ice, it provided a welcome revenue to the residents who made ice for sale. For the school children being so near, it was a tempting, exciting and often dangerous challenge to play on the ice before it really was safe.

In the days when life was not so hectic, many leisure hours in the summertime were spent

rowing a boat on these placid waters. Lucky was the youngster who had an uncle living in the village where he could spend his holidays.

This area was first established as a school district by a Douglas by-law No. 13 on August 19, 1884. Later a subsequent Rhineland by-law No. 133 on June 7, 1904, established it as Altbergthal S.D. No. 1296. A private school operated in this district until 1918 with the last teacher being Mr. Johan Schellenberg.

The public school, located on SW 1-2-2W, operated until July 1, 1965, when it became part of Consolidated New Hope. The school building was then moved to New Hope, where it provided extra classrooms until fire destroyed the New Hope School on January 24, 1979. After a new school was built, the original Altbergthal School was moved to the Rhineland Pioneer Centre lot, where it now serves as a museum. (Photos courtesy D. B. Funk)

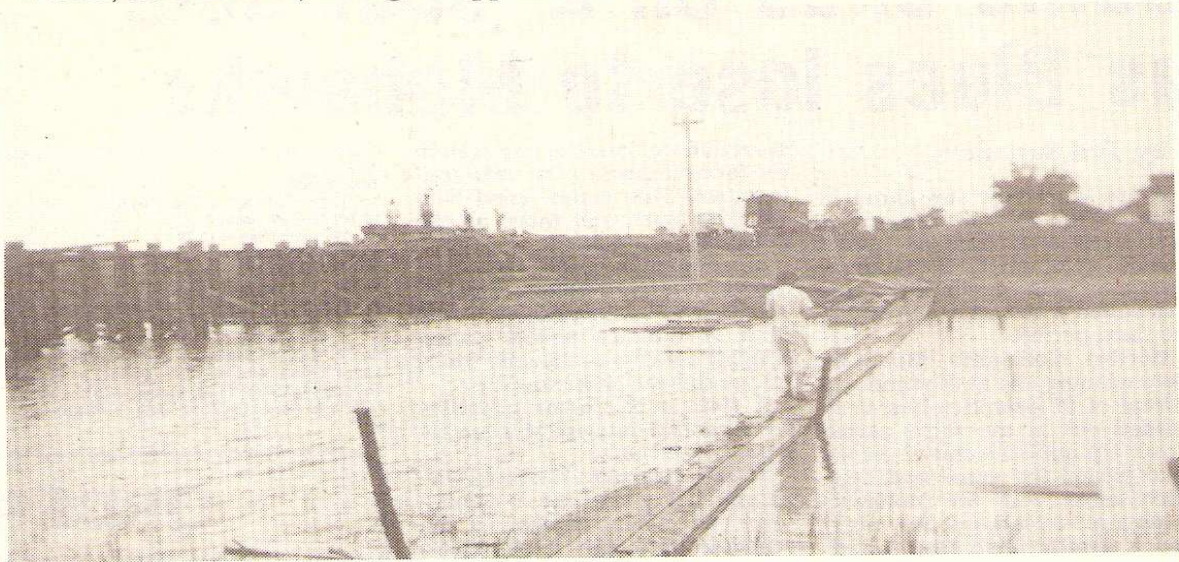


Altbergthal School



Photo taken June, 1942, with Mr. Jacob Koop, teacher, surrounded by Altbergthal school children, include the following (starting top left): Sarah Klippenstein, Susie Wiebe, Irene Koop, Annie Klippenstein, Trudy Wiebe, Annie Dueck, Bernard Toews, Henry Dueck, George Dueck, Peter Giesbrecht, Susie Schroeder, Sarah Dueck, Tina Giesbrecht, Helen Dueck, Cornie Giesbrecht, Henry Giesbrecht, John Wiebe, Bernard Funk, Wilbert Funk, Lawrence Klippenstein, Peter Dueck, David Klippenstein, Cornie Klippenstein, Tina Dueck, Annie Wiebe, Eva Dueck, Evelyn Funk, Albert Koop, Diedrich Dueck, Alfred Klippenstein, Ernest Funk, Eva Friesen, Sarah Dueck, Peter Wiebe, George Wieler, John Dueck, George Klippenstein. (Not all identified).

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lighted  
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Flood photos taken in Spring 1950 after flood washed away bridge. When water was high it often covered farmyards in the village. Footbridge across to school with teacher Tina K. Elias (Mrs. Gordon Kehler) walking on it.



Another method of getting across.